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Population and Migration

Geburten-Rückgang und Geburten-Regelung im Lichte der individuellen und der sozialen Hygiene. By A. GROTJAHN. (Berlin: Louis Marcus Verlagsbuchhandlung. 1914. Pp. xiv, 371. 6 M.)

This is an important addition to the already long list of books on the falling birth-rate. It is an even more distinguished contribution to the literature of birth-control. Indeed it would be difficult to find in this latter field another work equally informing or equally judicial in spirit. Few of the books which have been written on the restriction of births have been truly dispassionate. Most have been inspired by militant enthusiasm for reform or by indignant aversion. Professor Grotjahn is a physician, a teacher at the University of Berlin, and an observer of existing conditions. He has been sensible enough to see that birth-prevention is now not merely a possibility, but rather an established, prevalent fact; and he has proceeded to analyze it with a physician's intimacy and with a grasp of scientific method which all too few physicians have at their command.

The book is divided into four parts. The first sets forth the possibility of regulating births. Here the author, writing as a physician, discusses at some length the various means in general use to prevent conception or to avert its consequence. Part II states the justification of this birth-control; part III considers the dangers of a diminishing birth-rate; part IV attempts to sketch a policy of adjustment. But beneath this subdivision there runs through the book a general argument somewhat as follows.

More and more it is becoming common knowledge that births may be restricted in many different ways. Some of the means of restriction—those in particular which give most definite assurance of absolute prevention—are substantially without ill effect upon the health of those who use them. Indeed, they are in many respects positively beneficial, through checking the spread of venereal disease, or sparing the burdens and dangers of maternity to women unfitted by illness or physical defect. As an aid to eugenics, birth-control makes feasible the repression of defective stocks. It relieves the excessive infant mortality which otherwise ravages families where birth follows birth in ruthless succession. All in all, if rightly exercised, it is a momentous factor of human welfare. Unfortunately it is not always rightly exercised. Abused,

it leads to a serious decline of population. The nations or social classes which most resort to it are threatened with inundation by those whose multiplication is unrestrained. Diminution of numbers brings relaxation, and a weakening of the healthy stress and upward movement that vitalize peoples whose rank and file are recruited by an abundant birth-rate. These resultant evils are manifest in all the leading civilizations today. Their cause lies in the fact that sex-impulse no longer leads necessarily to parenthood, for the practice of preventing births introduces a distinction at will. Since under these new conditions families are markedly smaller than before it appears that parenthood has ceased to be virtually inevitable and has not yet proved itself to every one to be wholly desirable. For the moment, the desire for children and the sense of a race-duty to provide them are not strong enough to outweigh the material disadvantages which individualist economic institutions inflict on large families. But this analysis suggests the directions in which a solution of the difficulty is to be sought. The desire and the patriotic obligation of parenthood must be strengthened; on the other hand economic obstacles must be systematically removed in every possible way. There must be levied on the unmarried, the childless, and the parents of few children, taxes in aid of families with many children to support. Further rewards and privileges for parenthood must be provided by proportioning wages and salaries to size of family, and by granting to heads of families a preference in appointments to public or private positions and perhaps—through the device of plural voting—a larger measure of political power. There should be a system of parenthood insurance; thoroughgoing housing reform; and a wise agrarian policy in order that the rural districts may still send their vigorous contribution of migrants to the cities. Such a comprehensive and affirmative policy is the only wise treatment for the modern disorders of populations. Repressive measures directed against the means of birth-restriction are wholly misguided; for while they may largely deprive society of benefit from the intelligent control of births they are quite powerless to stop the prevention of births in general. The naïve, involuntary reproduction of mankind has been lastingly disturbed by the intervention of reason. Order can be restored only by making the process wholly rational.

With Dr. Grotjahn's description of conditions one will not substantially disagree. His protest against treating the dwindling birth-rate as a case for the police is courageous and eminently

sensible. The appropriateness of his constructive policy will be much more generally questioned. Even his ideal of a strong increase of population as the great result to be attained is not undebatable; for it seems, without sufficient reasons given, to subordinate the welfare of the individual man (and still more the welfare of the individual woman) to the supposed welfare of the state. No doubt a fairly good argument could be constructed in favor of smaller populations, especially if all nations and classes alike declined in numbers and thus eliminated the consideration of a disturbed balance of numerical power. But Dr. Grotjahn, as a continental writer, can not lose sight of the military factor. Expressly, again and again, his theme recurs to the menace of the swarming Slavic frontier. His policy of population reform is in fact a policy of German nationalism. In other respects, too, he is somewhat provincially German; for nearly all his evidence on affairs in the world outside appears to come at second-hand through other German writers, and he more than once blunders seriously in statements concerning conditions in the United States. As a general and non-political study his book is marred by its restricted outlook and its preconceptions. But its defects are not vital. By whatever standard it is judged, it is a book of very real interest and significance.

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The American Japanese Problem. By SIDNEY L. GULICK. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1914. Pp. xii, 349. Illustrated. \$1.75.)

The Old World in the New. The Significance of Past and Present Immigration to the American People. By EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS. (New York: The Century Company. 1914. Pp. viii, 327. Maps and illustrations. \$2.40.)

Each of these books is written with a purpose, each from a broad knowledge of the facts and a wide intellectual horizon, and each is addressed to the thoughtful popular reader. The one is a well-considered appeal for a more liberal policy and a more rational attitude toward an alien race, in the interests of humanity and international peace; the other is a pointed and vigorous exposition of the dangers to American civilization from the continuation of a slovenly and sentimental immigration policy.

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